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# City of Somerville Council on Aging



167 Holland Street, Somerville, MA 02144

Love, Love, Love

Aaaah! Valentine's Day ! Hearts, flowers, and

candy. February is all about love. The focus, though, is on romance with someone you love. Don't forget to give yourself a little love, too. Treat yourself to a balanced breakfast, remind yourself about how amazing you are, or take a long relaxing bubble bath. Take a moment each day to make yourself feel special in some way. Then, after you've taken the time to love and to be kind to yourself, think about extending that kindness to others.

Lots of current research supports why being kind is good for you. In a recent article *Reader's Digest Magazine*, author Claire Buckis cites four reasons.

**1. Give It and You Will Receive It.** Research shows kindness can also make us happier. Professor Sonja Lyubomirsky from the University of California asked participants in a study to perform random acts of kindness over ten weeks. She found happiness increased with people who performed a wide variety of kind acts over people who performed one act of kindness repeatedly.

**2. It's Healthy.** Professor Stephen Post, in his book *Why Good Things Happen to Good People*, cites multiple evidence to support the notion that being kind is good for your health.

**3. It Feels Good.** A Hebrew University study found a link between kindness and a gene that releases dopamine, a feel-good neurotransmitter in the brain. Research cited in the book, *The Healing Power of Doing Good*, found that helpers reported a distinct physical sensation when being kind. Many reported feeling more energetic, warmer, and calmer and possessing a greater self-worth, a phenomenon dubbed the "helper's high."

**4. It Doesn't Cost Anything.** Kindness can't be bought and sold. Professor Sam Bowles published a report in *Science* this year stating that we prefer to do good deeds for their own sake. "People enjoy being kind to others much as they enjoy eating ice-cream. It gives us pleasure," he says.

## Community Baby Shower

The Somerville Council on Aging is pleased to be collaborating with the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC) to sponsor a Community Baby Shower for expectant young mothers. The event is scheduled for Tuesday, April 5th at 5:30 p.m.



If you like to knit and want to welcome

a new baby to the Somerville community, feel free to make a hat, booties, or receiving blanket to donate as a gift.

This small, pilot program is the first of what we hope will be many joint activities with the SFLC. For more information about the event, contact Janine Lotti at (617) 625-6600, ext. 2300.

## Message from the Mayor

Happy February Everyone!

I always like to think of February as midway through our New England Winter! As always, I see some things in the Council on Aging calendar that should help us have fun in the winter as we wait and hope for Spring.

For instance:

Two ways to celebrate Valentine's Day. We are so lucky to have such good friends at the Winter Hill Yacht Club. They are so generous with the space and their time. I'm sure this year's function will be a lot of fun. They always are.

On the actual Valentine's Day date, Sunday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, you can attend a free Boston Symphony Orchestra Chamber Music concert. Again, let me say how lucky we are to have such nice collaborations in place. I have heard wonderful things about the many BSO-sponsored activities Somerville's seniors have been able to enjoy for free.

This year, I see that Grandparents Day will take place at Holland Street on Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>. I have always said that two of Somerville's greatest resources are our kids and our older adults. That's why it's so exciting when the COA brings both groups together for programs.

A sure sign that winter will indeed end soon is that your Garden Club has started up again this month. This means it's already time to get ready for spring plantings!

I hope you will use these and the many other COA events and programs as distractions to get you through the winter months.

Remember, spring gets closer every day.



## Contacts & Information

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Cindy L. Hickey

### STAFF

Connie Lorenti ▪ Administrative Assistant

Suzanne Norton ▪ LICSW, Social Worker

Natasha Naim ▪ LCSW, Social Worker

Janine Lotti ▪ Senior Project Manager

Chris Kowaleski ▪ Health and Wellness Coordinator

Maureen Bastardi ▪ Outreach Coordinator

Josephine Raczkowski ▪ Administrative Assistant

Kim Moss ▪ Ralph and Jenny Director

Judy Calvey ▪ Holland Street Director

Brianna Walsh ▪ Social Work Intern

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### CROSS STREET CENTER

165 Broadway ▪ 617-625-6600, ext. 2335

Tuesday and Thursday 9 a.m.—1:30 p.m.

Wednesday 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

### HOLLAND STREET CENTER

167 Holland Street ▪ 617-625-6600, ext. 2300

Monday - Friday 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

### RALPH & JENNY CENTER

9 New Washington Street ▪ 617-666-5223

Monday-Thursday 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

## GET TO KNOW YOUR SENIOR CENTER

What do you think of when someone says the words “Senior Center”? Do you picture older people (much older than you, of course) sitting around playing bingo and shuffleboard? Eating bland meals while a television is blaring? Time to update your vision! **Senior centers are not what they used to be.** Today’s senior center is a vibrant, action-packed combination of fitness, job and volunteering headquarters, education, arts, transportation, and healthy dining.

Here are some things you might not know:

**Many senior centers are for anyone aged 50+.** You don’t have to be on Medicare to take advantage of all the great opportunities at your local center. ***Here in Somerville, three Centers serve anyone 55 and older.*** Today, nearly 11,000 senior centers serve 1 million older adults aged 50+ every day. Three-quarters visit their center one to three times per week and spend an average of 3.3 hours per visit. Research shows that compared with their peers, center participants have higher levels of health, social interaction, and life satisfaction.



**Senior centers don’t just offer card games.** Sure, cards are available (and fun and challenging). But most centers offer far more than that—everything from trips and special events to fine arts and crafts, music and dance, lifelong learning, and fitness and health programs. Just check out these examples from our own centers:

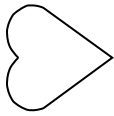
- In 2016, Somerville’s older adults can **take more than 25 different day and overnight trips and experience many other opportunities to participate in programs.** One great example: People who avoid eating out in area restaurants because they don’t like to go alone have loved participating in our new **restaurant club.** This is a great way to meet new people and to enjoy great food and drink at the same time.
- Due to **extensive community collaboration,** we have received federal, local, and private foundation grants for our youth, cultural, exercise, and wellness programming.
- Our **cultural and educational offerings** continue to grow and expand. We have had a great inaugural year for the “Foundations of Knowledge” speaker series, hosting artists and experts for monthly lectures about space, music, history, public policy, community-building, photography, and poetry (so far!). We have developed a great relationship with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, allowing us to attend two concerts at Symphony Hall for free and one at Tanglewood for very low cost. We’ve been visiting and benefitting from the talent at Berklee College of Music at least twice a month. COA Senior Project Manager Janine Lotti welcomes all new ideas and suggestions. Contact her at (617) 625-6600, ext. 2300.
- In addition to offering **one-on-one technology help** from two very skilled volunteers, we also hope to launch our own small computing center at Cross Street in the coming year.

**Senior centers are a great place to find work and volunteering opportunities.** The COA’s Volunteer Coordinator, Natasha Naim, has instituted a wonderful “Volunteer Roundtable” event that brings current and prospective volunteers together to share experiences and give support, as well as to encourage and develop new program ideas and opportunities for volunteers. If you are interested in learning more about volunteering, contact Natasha at (617) 625-6600, ext. 2300.

**Senior centers are also a great place to get healthy.** Wellness programming has really expanded in recent years. In addition to traditional programs like Zumba, yoga, and movement programs, Somerville was among the first in the nation to be part of the nationally recognized, evidence-based Fit4Life program, which has been scientifically proven to improve overall health and wellness. Ongoing nutrition education and the use of fresh produce from the COA’s own fertile garden beds encourage healthy living. Annual health and nutrition fairs continue to provide free information and health screenings for older adults. COA Wellness Coordinator, Christopher Kowaleski, is always listening and looking for new ways to bring healthy living options to Somerville’s older adults. Contact him at (617) 625-6600, ext. 2300.

## MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY

<b>1</b> 9:30 Monthly Breakfast (H) Guest speaker - Bryan Bishop, Director of Veterans Services 10:00 Activity & Movie (RJ) 10:30 Moonlighters (H) 11:30 Lunch (RJ) <b>1:00 Bereavement Group (H)</b>	<b>2</b> 10:00 English Conversation (C) 10:00 Knitting for Babies (RJ) 10:00 Cards (RJ) 10:30 Men's Group (H) 11:30 Lunch (RJ, C) 12:00 Computer tutorial with Norbert (by appointment only) (H) 12:45 Bingo (RJ)	<b>3</b> 10:00 English Conversation (C) 11:30 Lunch (RJ, C) 12:45 Bingo (RJ) 1:00 Bowling at Flatbreads	<b>4</b> <b>All Centers Closed</b> <b>Valentine's Day Celebration</b> <b>WHYC.</b>	<b>5</b> 10:00 Book Club (H) 11:30 Lunch (H) 12:45 Bingo (H)
<b>8</b> 9:00 Gardening Club (H) 11:30 Chinese New Year Super Bingo (H) 1:00 Bereavement Group (H) 4:30 LGBT Advisory Group (H)	<b>9</b> 10:00 English Conversation (C) 10:00 Knitting for Babies (RJ) 10:00 Cards (RJ) 10:30 Low Vision (H) 11:30 Lunch (RJ, C) 12:00 Computer tutorial with Norbert (by appointment only) (H) 12:45 Bingo (RJ)	<b>10</b> 10:00 English Conversation (C) 11:30 Lunch (RJ, C) 12:45 Bingo (RJ) 1:00 Bowling at Flatbreads	<b>11</b> 9:00 <b>Yoga resumes***</b> (H) 10:00 English Conversation (C) 10:00 Knitting for Babies (RJ) 10:00 Current Events (H) 10:00 Cards (RJ) 11:00 Computer tutorial with Barbara (by appointment only) (H) 11:30 Lunch (H, RJ, C) 12:45 Bingo (H, RJ)	<b>12</b> <b>10:00 Somerville Museum Tour</b> 11:30 Lunch (H) 12:45 Bingo (H)
<b>15</b> <b>All Centers Closed</b> <b>Presidents Day</b>	<b>16</b> 10:00 Poetry Workshop (C) 10:00 English Conversation (C) 10:00 Knitting for Babies (RJ) 10:00 Cards (RJ) 11:00 Social Worker (RJ) 11:30 Lunch (RJ, C) 12:00 Computer tutorial with Norbert (by appointment only) (H) 12:45 Bingo (RJ) 2:00 Restaurant Club - Tiki Island 6:00 Caregivers Group (H)	<b>17</b> Grandparent's Day (H) 1:00 Bowling at Flatbreads <b>Cross Street Center and Ralph &amp; Jenny Center will be closed today so that everyone can join in the activities at our Grandparent's Day.</b> <b>5:00 Supper &amp; Bingo (H)</b>	<b>18</b> 10:00 English Conversation (C) 10:00 Knitting for Babies (RJ) 10:00 Blood Pressure Screening (H) 10:00 Current Events (H) 10:00 Cards (RJ) 11:00 Computer tutorial with Barbara (by appointment only) (H) 11:30 Lunch (H, RJ, C) 12:45 Bingo (H, RJ)	<b>19</b> 11:30 Lunch (H) 12:45 Bingo (H)
<b>22</b> 9:30 Veteran's Group (H) 10:00 Lecture Series Glover's Marblehead Regiment (RJ) 10:30 Moonlighters (H) 1:00 Bereavement Group (H)	<b>23</b> 10:00 Poetry Workshop (C) 10:00 Housing 101 (H) 10:00 English Conversation (C) 10:00 Knitting for Babies (RJ) 10:00 Cards (RJ) 11:30 Lunch (RJ, C)	<b>24</b> 10:00 English Conversation (C) 11:30 Social Worker (C) 11:30 Lunch (RJ, C) 12:45 Bingo (RJ) 1:00 Bowling at Flatbreads <b>11:00 to 1:00 Movie Screening of</b>	<b>25</b> 10:00 English Conversation (C) 10:00 Knitting for Babies (RJ) 10:00 Current Events (H) 10:00 Cards (RJ) 11:00 Computer tutorial with Barbara (by appointment only) (H)	<b>26</b> 11:30 Lunch (H) 12:45 Bingo (H)

7:00 Berklee - Harp	12:00 Computer tutorial with Norbert (by appointment only) (H) 12:45 Bingo (RJ) <b>Ristorante Fiore</b>	the documentary "This is East" at our Cross Street Center	11:30 Lunch (RJ) - Joint lunch w/ Holland - Portuguese Food 11:30 Lunch (C) 12:45 Bingo (RJ) <b>7:30 Berklee - Bass</b>	
29 10:00 Activity & Movie (RJ) 10:30 Moonlighters (H) 11:30 Lunch (RJ) 1:00 Bereavement Group (H)			<b>Valentine's Day Treat</b> <b>Boston Symphony Orchestra</b> <b>Free Community Chamber Concert</b> <b>Sunday, February 14th at 3:00 p.m.</b>	

To sign up for Council on Aging events or classes, Please call (617) 625-6600, ext. 2300. Somerville residents shall receive registration priority on all trips. Non-residents may request to be placed on a waiting list and if openings exist on a trip, non-residents may be able to register. Proof of residency may be required. In all cases, participants are not considered enrolled in a class or event list until deposit payment in full is rendered.

## WEEKLY EXERCISE AND NUTRITION CLASS SCHEDULE

Monday: \*Fit-4-Life Group C - 1:00 p.m. - (H)

Tuesday: Strengthening - 9:15 a.m. - \$3 per class (H) / \*Fit-4-Life - 11:15 a.m. (Cross Street) / Dalcroze Eurhythmics - 1:00 p.m. - \$2/class (H)\*\*\* / \*LBT Fit-4-Life, 6:00 p.m. (H)

Wednesday: \*Fit-4-Life - Group A - 8:45 a.m. / Group B (nutrition) - 9 a.m./ Group B (exercise) - 10:00 a.m. (H) / Group A (nutrition) 10:00 a.m. / Group C (nutrition) - noon (H) / Group C (exercise) - 1:00 p.m. (H) / Zumba 4 All - 5:15 p.m. - \$3/class (H)

Thursday: Yoga - 9:00 a.m. - (H)\*\*\*\* / Strengthening - 9:30 a.m. - \$3 per class (RJ) / \*Fit-4-Life, 11:15 a.m. (Cross Street) / \*LBT Fit-4-Life, 6:00 p.m. (H)

Friday: \*Fit-4-Life - Group A - 8:45 a.m. - (H); \*Fit-4-Life - Group B - 10:00 a.m. (H)

\*All Fit-4-Life classes are \$10 per month and require pre-registration / \*\* Walking & Talking Group is on hiatus until springtime / \*\*\* Dalcroze Eurhythmics is on hiatus / \*\*\*\*Yoga is a 5 week series / One on one nutrition is on hiatus until further notice

## KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

**H: HOLLAND STREET**

**C: CROSS STREET CENTER**

**RJ: RALPH & JENNY CENTER**

## Social Services News You Can use

Do you know about **MassOptions?** This is a new, free service from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services. The seven-day-a-week service aims to simplify access to long-term supports and services for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and their caregivers throughout the state.

The service, which was launched in November of 2015, makes it possible to call just one phone number—**1-844-422-6277**—to gain access to many different services. By calling this number, or visiting the website at [www.MassOptions.org](http://www.MassOptions.org), citizens who need help are connected to trained specialists who help them by phone or on-line chat. These specialists connect those in need of services to in-home supports, day services, equipment and supplies, mental health services, and personal care services.

“The launch of MassOptions will make access to community services easier for individuals who need to find long-term services and are not sure where to turn,” said the Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders. “Knowing there’s someone on the other end of the phone or online who can help residents navigate the options in their community is reassuring.”

MassOptions is possible through funding created under the Affordable Care Act of 2010. To receive this funding, states needed to commit to achieving 50 percent spending on non-institutional long term services and supports by September 2015 and to implementing structural changes to improve their long-term care system. Massachusetts surpassed expectations and is a national leader, reporting 68 percent spending on non-institutional long term services and supports. *(excerpted from MA HHS news release dated 11/17/2015).*

### Winter SADness

**Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)** is more than just a letdown after the holidays or an adjustment to the winter cold. It is a mood disorder that people may experience who may have no other mental health issue throughout most of the year. It includes depressive symptoms that have a seasonal pattern, at specific times, for at least two seasons. Some symptoms include sleeping too much, having little energy, feeling irritable, and more negative thinking. Some people withdraw socially, display a lack of interest or pleasure, and gain weight. The symptoms can vary with different intensity and may be part of a larger clinical problem. These issues should be discussed with your doctor to get an accurate diagnosis and treatment recommendations.

**What causes Seasonal Affective Disorder?** Some think that as humans evolved, we had exposure to less sunlight, faced food scarcity, and even hibernated in winter months. So SAD may be associated with human development.

**Are there any strategies to counteract this?** Light therapy is one suggestion. Light boxes vary and there are very specific recommendations to follow when using a light box. There are also other alternatives: Try bright full spectrum light bulbs in your living space; use a dawn simulator to wake you in the morning; or just spend more time outside exposed to the sunlight. Regular exercise, mindful eating, and shaking yourself up in other ways can also help. Try getting out socially. Invite someone to tea, the movies, museum or for a walk. Learn something new. Take up a new project; do volunteer work; or join a gym or other club or group. And use all your senses to enhance your life: listen to good music or nature sounds; bring more color to your life; bake something that fills your home with delightful smells; eat the full spectrum of savory tastes; and go out and hug someone...it all works. *(excerpted from an original article by Kathy Hoey, LICSW, Senior Psychiatric Social Work Supervisor, Cambridge Health Alliance.)*



## LGBTQ News



The LGBTQ Advisory Board is pleased to announce another addition to the Advisory Board. Bryan Bishop, the City's new Director of Veterans Services has graciously volunteered to be part of our group. Bryan brings with him a wealth of knowledge and more importantly, his personal experience.

"We had a terrific planning session in January," said Maureen Bastardi, Outreach Worker and Liaison to the LGBTQ Advisory Board, "and we plan on having another great session on Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup>. We will make sure to keep everyone updated on the events we are planning and, of course, if anyone would like to volunteer on the Advisory Board – there's always room." **The next LGBTQ Advisory Board Meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 P.M. – conference room located at 167 Holland Street.**



Also, be sure to mark your calendars for another upcoming *important and informative LGBTQ event*. **Senator Patricia (Pat) D. Jehlen** from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Middlesex District (which cover Somerville, Medford and parts of Cambridge and Winchester) will be at the LGBTQ Event Night on **Monday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 5:30 PM in the Atrium of Holland Street**. She is coming to discuss the Special Legislative Commission on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Aging Report that came out the end of last year.

## Consumer Information



Periodically, the Council on Aging receives notices about consumer scams in the area. Whenever this happens, we try our best to educate Somerville's older adults about actions they can take if they suspect a scam. ***The latest scam appears to be targeted to older homeowners interested in saving on energy costs.*** Scammers call claiming to have information regarding "solar development." We received this alert from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA), after they received notification from the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU). Apparently, callers will appear to be from DPU, because the main DPU number (617-305-3500) appears on caller ID. The callers inform potential scam victims that they owe money to DPU (or another entity). Please be aware that this is a phone scam. Do not provide the caller with any personal information, and hang up immediately. If you receive a call like the one described, please report it to the DPU's Consumer Division at (617) 737-2836 or 1-877-886-5066 (toll free.)

Prompted by this and other consumer scam notifications, the Council on Aging has developed a series of workshops devoted to the needs and interests of older adult consumers. This "***Living Frugally on a Fixed Income***" series begins on Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, and will feature a variety of consumer-related topics, including, but not limited to, strategies and protections for savvy consumers. For more information, see this month's insert or contact our Social Worker Suzanne Norton at (617) 625-6600, ext. 2300.

## Spotlight on . . .



### Norbert DeAmato

Have you:

- Attended Council on Aging functions, including our monthly breakfasts or special luncheons?
- Learned from and shared stories and experiences at one of our ongoing Men's or Veterans' groups?
- Used a Tuesday afternoon to receive personal tutoring about laptop and tablet use?

If you have done ANY of these things, then you have met one of our indispensable and invaluable volunteers, Norbert DeAmato. Ever since he became a COA volunteer, Norbert has helped out in any way he can. He has gradually accepted more and more responsibility, and has accepted it with a big smile and an incredibly positive attitude. He almost never says "no"—unless, of course, something falls on the day he spends with his new granddaughter, Charlotte. She is one very lucky little girl!

When approached about being this month's "Spotlight," Norbert answered very modestly with a thank you and a plug to include the Veterans and Mens group work, hoping that he could bring even more new members into those close-knit and interesting groups. This is typical for Norbert, who, we know, thinks of others more often than of himself.

### Somerville Council on Aging

Somerville Community Service Center

167 Holland St.

Somerville, MA 02144

617-625-6600 ext. 2300

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